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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/59/503/Add.2)*]

59/201. Enhancing the role of regional, subregional and other organizations and arrangements in promoting and consolidating democracy

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations,

Recalling its resolution 55/96 of 4 December 2000 and all relevant resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights, in particular resolutions 1999/57 of 27 April 1999,[1] 2000/47 of 25 April 2000,[2] 2001/41 of 23 April 2001,[3] 2002/46 of 23 April 2002,[4] 2003/36 of 23 April 2003[5] and 2004/30 of 19 April 2004,[6]

Recalling also that all peoples have the right to self-determination, by virtue of which they can freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development,

Reaffirming its resolve, expressed, inter alia, in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[7] to implement the principles and practices of democracy, and recognizing the diverse nature of the community of the world's democracies,

1. *Declares* that the essential elements of democracy include respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, inter alia, freedom of association and peaceful assembly and of expression and opinion, and the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives, to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic free elections by universal and equal suffrage and by secret ballot guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the people, as well as a pluralistic system of political parties and organizations, respect for the rule

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 3* (E/1999/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[2] Ibid., *2000, Supplement No. 3* and corrigendum (E/2000/23 and Corr.1), chap. II, sect. A.

[3] Ibid., *2001, Supplement No. 3* (E/2001/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[4] Ibid., *2002, Supplement No. 3* (E/2002/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[5] Ibid., *2003, Supplement No. 3* (E/2003/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[6] Ibid., *2004, Supplement No. 3* (E/2004/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[7] See resolution 55/2.

of law, the separation of powers, the independence of the judiciary, transparency and accountability in public administration, and free, independent and pluralistic media;

2. *Reaffirms* that the promotion and protection of all human rights is a basic prerequisite for the existence of a democratic society, and recognizes the importance of the continuous development and strengthening of the United Nations human rights mechanisms for the consolidation of democracy;

3. *Recognizes* the importance of all actions taken at the regional and subregional levels that are aimed at facilitating the establishment, development and consolidation of democratic institutions, based on democratic values and principles and capable of responding to the specific needs of the countries in each region;

4. *Acknowledges* the importance of better awareness of democratic values and principles in all regions and for all people;

5. *Reaffirms* that democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, that democracy is based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives and, in that context, that the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national, regional and international levels should be universal and conducted without conditions attached, the international community should support the strengthening and promoting of democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the entire world;

6. *Acknowledges* that democracy contributes substantially to preventing violent conflict, to accelerating reconciliation and reconstruction in post-conflict peacebuilding and, in peacetime, to resolving disputes that may impede economic and social progress;

7. *Recognizes* the need for Member States to pay further special attention and contribute to democratic institution-building by including relevant objectives to this effect in the mandates of peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding operations and by providing adequate resources in that regard;

8. *Invites* intergovernmental regional, subregional and other organizations and arrangements, as well as non-governmental organizations, to engage actively in work at the local, national, subregional and regional levels for the constant promotion and consolidation of democracy and to initiate exchanges with the United Nations system on their experiences, inter alia, by:

(*a*) Identifying and disseminating best practices and experiences at the regional, subregional and cross-regional levels in promoting and protecting democratic processes;

(*b*) Establishing and supporting regional, subregional and national civic education programmes that provide access to information on democratic governance and stimulate dialogue on the functioning of democracy;

(*c*) Encouraging the study, in schools and universities, of democracy, human rights, good governance and the functioning of public administration, political institutions and civil society organizations;

(*d*) Elaborating and widely distributing reports, assessments, training material, handbooks, case studies and documentation on alternative types of

democratic constitutions, electoral systems and administration so as to assist populations in making more informed choices;

(*e*) Encouraging the use of democratic consultative mechanisms in disputes as an opportunity for the parties involved to advance their interests within institutional frameworks;

(*f*) Working with the focal point for democracy of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

9. *Invites* States members of intergovernmental regional organizations and arrangements to include or reinforce the provisions of the constitutive acts of the organizations and arrangements that are aimed at promoting democratic values and principles and protecting and consolidating democracy in their respective societies;

10. *Welcomes* the adoption by various regional, subregional and other organizations and arrangements of institutional rules designed to prevent situations that threaten democratic institutions;

11. *Invites* intergovernmental regional organizations and arrangements to institutionalize dialogue among themselves on joint actions to promote and consolidate democracy and democratic practices in all areas;

12. *Encourages* Member States and intergovernmental regional and cross-regional organizations and arrangements, as well as non-governmental organizations, to initiate networks and partnerships with a view to assisting the Governments and civil society in their respective regions in disseminating knowledge and information about the role of democratic institutions and mechanisms in meeting the political, economic, social and cultural challenges in their respective societies;

13. *Urges* the continuation and expansion of activities carried out by the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and Member States to promote and consolidate democracy within the framework of international cooperation;

14. *Invites* the United Nations system to identify, develop and coordinate effective policies of assistance in the field of democracy and, in this context, to support programmes of technical assistance to States, upon their request, aimed at:

(*a*) Developing a competent, independent and impartial judiciary and accountable government institutions;

(*b*) Strengthening political party systems, free and independent media and civil society organizations;

(*c*) Fostering a democratic culture;

15. *Calls upon* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to stimulate dialogue and interaction within the United Nations system and between the United Nations system and interested intergovernmental regional, subregional and other organizations and arrangements on the ways and means of promoting democratic values and principles, on the basis of the present resolution and other relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Commission on Human Rights, and, to this end, to invite, inter alia, the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, including its Electoral Assistance Division, and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and regional

organizations to inform the Commission on Human Rights, at its sixty-first session, of action taken to promote and consolidate democracy;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of Member States.

74th plenary meeting
20 December 2004